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T. Lucretius Carus de Rerum Natura. Buch III erklärt von RICHARD HEINZE. Teubner, Leipzig, 1897. Pp. vi + 206.

The edition of the third book of Lucretius which we have before us is the second volume in the new series of *Wissenschaftliche Commentare* published under the editorship of Professor Kaibel of Strassburg. It is a worthy successor to the inaugural volume of the series, the *Electra* of Sophocles, edited by Professor Kaibel himself. Like that work, it not only undertakes to present a new and more thoroughgoing interpretation of the text chosen, but it also stands for a theory of interpretation as yet but scantily represented. If I understand the purpose of the commentary aright, it assumes that there is much more in an ideal interpretation than an explanation of the difficulties of thought, language or text. It would seem to aim at something further—at illustration of the background of thought and the habit of language out of which the poet's work has proceeded. Its effort is not only to explain difficulties, but in a manner to reproduce the creative atmosphere in which the poet wrought. It would substitute for mere explanation a background of consciousness. It may be that this is to put more into the editor's work than he himself felt, but if so, it is under the influence of the agreeable feeling that in this work we have a real approximation to a true interpretation, infinitely removed from the vast bulk of editions "with notes."

In the brief but instructive preface the editor calls attention to the main directions of his effort. The task of the editor, he points out, consists in an explanation of the relation of the poet to his material, since the poet is only the interpreter of the teachings of another, and of the transformation of this material from scientific prose to verse. The content of Lucretian verse therefore requires attention first of all. In this consists, I believe, the most original and positive contribution of the editor to the interpretation of Lucretius. The vast mass of scattered and fragmentary material relating to the philosophy of Epicurus has been brought to bear upon this portion of the *de rerum natura* with an insight before which many an obscurity has disappeared, and with a sureness of touch that reveals the master in the field of Greek philosophy, to one phase of which an earlier work of the editor was devoted (Xenocrates, Lpz. 1891). This material is presented not only current with the text, but in the introduction to the commentary the psychology of Epicurus is presented briefly, but with great clearness, and in such a manner as to cast much light on a field in which the obscurity is not wholly the fault of a scanty tradition. In the whole matter of the relation of Lucretius to his sources, Heinze seems to have penetrated much further than his predecessors (notably, for example, in the arguments for the mortality of the soul), as was no more, to be sure, than could fairly be demanded with the results of much recent investigation in this field at hand (e. g. Usener's *Epicurea*), but still with an originality and breadth of grasp that deserve the fullest recognition.

Closely connected with this subject is the question of terminology, to which the editor also calls attention in his preface. Here it has been his effort to ascertain in every case the equivalence of the terms chosen, and

when the exactness of the Latin word employed might be questioned, the possibilities of expression at the disposal of the poet have been weighed. In this connection Munro's defence of the poet against his own complaint of the poverty of the Latin tongue and of the difficulty of giving expression to obscure ideas in a field of thought never before trodden by Roman bard, will be remembered (cf. Munro, *Int.* p. 11). Certainly in this well known passage Munro has given expression to the feelings of Lucretian scholars since Lachmann restored a legible text. For there is a confidence and sureness of movement in the language of the poet that does not leave room for much consciousness of the inadequacy of the language to the theme. But Heinze in his note on vss. 258-261, on the nature of the admixture of the elements of the soul, observes that no portion of the poem is more obscure, and furthermore that it is the only portion of the Epicurean doctrine which Lucretius greatly abridged. The causes of this he holds are therefore not only the obscurity of the subject-matter, but he believes that we must also give credence to the poet, whose complaint here is reiterated, that the language did not permit him to say what he gladly would.

In the matter of the text the editor has been quite conservative. His own conjectures are not numerous, nor do they extend to changes that have a radical effect upon the thought. In vs. 58 (*eripitur persona manare*), where the Itali read *manet res*, he suggests *mala re*, but does not introduce the reading into his text, and wisely, since from no point of view does it seem so satisfactory as the correction of the It., which in turn we may still grant is not convincing. In vs. 194 *constat for extat*, a rather doubtful change in the interest of conventional phraseology. In vs. 337 *praeterea* is changed to *propterea*, as it seems to me correctly in view of the argument. In vs. 394 *quam sis = suis*, attractive. In vs. 433 *feruntur* seems correctly restored for *geruntur*. That vs. 493 is hopelessly corrupt is not made convincing to me. In the matter of transposition and rearrangement (apart from single verses), which has been a favorite field for the display of editorial ingenuity, the editor is very conservative, and has shown very clearly that most difficulties of this kind are to be removed by interpretation. Thus at vss. 417 and 526, the apprehension of the true dispositio makes transposition quite superfluous. Indeed the editor's grasp of thought and arrangement reminds me not infrequently of the keen sense for psychological suggestion in explanation of transitions which Kiessling displays and was the first to apply with discernment to the interpretation of Horace. When it is remembered that Heinze has assumed the responsibility of revision for Kiessling's Horace, it is not unlikely that we have a clue to the source of the training which marks much of the characteristic quality of this work.

It is a satisfaction to find so pervading a sympathy with all the moods and themes of the poet as the editor reveals, and one is pleased with his expression of the feeling that Lucretius has in most cases elevated the prosaic parts of his theme to the rank of true poetry. It used to be, and I think still is, commonly said (e. g. by Teuffel) that Lucretius was a great poet

sadly astray in the choice of a subject. I am sure, however, that many a devotee of Lucretius will join with me in protest against this utterance. For when we consider the sort of work that was possible or that was likely to have challenged the attention of a Roman poet in the first century B. C., we cannot, I believe, conceive of any theme that we should willingly exchange for the *de rerum natura*. What were an epic of any theme, mythological or national, or the Alexandrine sources of inspiration of his contemporaries, in comparison with a subject-matter which called forth a passionate intensity of feeling and devotion that we miss in all other Roman poetry? Of refined workmanship and rhetorical vigor there is no lack elsewhere in the higher poetry of Rome, but of feeling, verging at times to an almost unhealthy fervor, there is no other grandly sustained example, and let us not therefore complain of a subject-matter which was its inspiration. I know not if there is a statelier or simpler example of intense dramatic conception than the long cumulative enumeration of the considerations which show the mortality of the soul, summed up in those triumphant verses beginning *Nil igitur ad nos mors est neque pertinet hilum*. To the sagacious and sympathetic interpreter of this culminating book of Lucretius, scholars who have leisure to peruse his work will feel a sense of personal obligation.

G. L. HENDRICKSON.